

ASSESSOR'S REPORT NOVEMBER 2013

Judy Mathiau

Inventory Update Project – Letters and surveys will be mailed to all residential home owners in Winslow during the first two weeks of January 2014. Initially, this project would target ¼ of the town each of the next 4 years. However, in speaking with Maine Revenue Services and fellow colleagues, I have decided to encompass the whole town at once.

It is anticipated that surveys will be returned on or before April 1, 2014. These will be reviewed and compared to existing data regarding the components of the property. Those who opt for the on-site inspection will be scheduled as feasible and weather permitting. It would be ideal if the project could be completed effective for the Fall 2014 tax billing, however, the work itself may take additional time and not be implemented until 2015.

Summit Natural Gas – The Kennebec Valley area assessors met for the first time during November; to discuss the pipeline construction project. The meeting was attended by assessors from Waterville, Oakland, Fairfield, Vassalboro, Augusta, Gardiner and Hallowell. As a group, we hope to assess the valuation of the pipeline based on a cost approach method. We recognize the need to be consistent and fair as we work through this together.

Our next meeting will be December 17th with the addition of Mike Duguay and Ken Young of Summit. They will provide us with a basic overview of the project and answer questions we may have.

BETE Audits - the Property Tax Division in Augusta has begun to conduct on-site audits of the assessor's information regarding approved and denied BETE (Business Equipment Tax Exemption) applications. This program first started in 2007, exempting business equipment NOT related to a retail business. Business owners are required to apply for this exemption by May 1st of each year. At the beginning of this exemption program, it was believed that the equipment located in a retail business would not qualify – however, once tested, the guidelines now allow retail businesses to apply if the equipment is not directly related to the sales activity. An example for this would be a postage machine located in an office of a store. That item can now qualify.

In Winslow, we approved a total of \$1,277,100 in exempt personal property for the 2014/2015 fiscal year.

Web Site Resources – I presented to the Mid Coast Assessors during their monthly meeting. My presentation involved web sites that assessors can use as a resource for discovery of taxable property, legal research, real estate sites and publications.

September Sales – I processed 19 transfers with an actual sale price. Unfortunately, only 8 are considered "arms length transactions". 2 sales were foreclosure auction sales. The remainder were questionable but included two large tracts of land enrolled in farmland and 4 were two family duplex homes.